

and lay its hand upon the seamless robe. There is no *laying hold* of eternal life in Plymouthism. Yet Jesus said, "Stretch forth thy hand," "Come unto Me," etc.

#### ERRORS CONCERNING THE MORAL LAW.

Their teaching upon the Christian's relation to the moral law is simply Antinomianism. They claim that Christians are not under any obligation to it. The stern Sinaitic Code was abolished for them in the death of Christ. Sinai was for the Jew and not for the Gentile; the Christian is "not under the law but under grace." If he puts himself under the Ten Commandments, he puts himself under the curse. The Decalogue does not bind hand, foot, eye or tongue; and if the Plymouthite is guilty of any rascality, he claims that it is not he that has done it, *but the devil*. Who could believe or trust a Plymouthite after this? But, in reading the Scriptures, the Brethren have a bad habit of stopping just where they should go on. Paul certainly says in Rom. vi. 14, "For ye are not under the law, but under grace." His argument here is that the legal enactments of the law have made *no provision* for our salvation from the *power and penalty* of sin—but *grace has*. In this case, as in so many others, the Brethren have either ignorantly or intentionally wrested the Scripture from its evident teaching. Had they read the following verse it might have checked their impulsiveness. The Saviour's own words also, Matt. v. 17-18: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets," etc., are sufficient to show that the law is still in force.

#### ERROR CONCERNING THE BELIEVER'S RELATION TO EARTHLY EMPLOYMENTS AND PHILANTHROPIC INSTITUTIONS.

We are told that the world is under the curse; that most of its employments are for the benefit of the devil, and that its governments are in the hands of the wicked. The believer, therefore, it is said, must not touch or handle these unclean things. He may be a doctor or a farmer, however, or may work at a few branches of mechanics; but most of the other employments are devilish. Even missionary societies and benevolent institutions are placed in the same category, so the believer must "come out from among them." Well, Joseph was a prime minister in a heathen country, and what is more, seems to have been placed there by God. Daniel and Nehemiah were politicians in the government of Persia, and nobody condemns them for it. Erastus was chamberlain in filthy Corinth, and Cornelius was a military officer of imperial Rome, and there were "saints in Cæsar's household." But did an apostle, or an angel, or God ever command them to "come out"? The Brethren would have done so, and would do so still. This is another instance of their obtuseness, or something worse. I take it that Paul was as good a Christian and as great a scholar as any of the Brethren, yet we find him appealing to Lysias and unto Cæsar! And is it not by Christ that "kings reign and princes decree justice?"

#### ERROR CONCERNING THE CHURCH.

The Brethren deny the existence of a spiritual and invisible church within the various visible organizations. And yet the parables of Christ and the Apostolic and pastoral epistles teach this distinction. We are told, farther, that the church had no actual existence before the Day of Pentecost—that before the outpouring of the Holy Ghost it existed only in the *purpose* of God. Mr. W. Trotter says: "It was not till after the death and resurrection of Jesus that the church began. As to its actual existence on the earth, the church was formed by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost." This quietly rules out of the church all the Old Testament saints, all the worthies catalogued in Heb. xi. and the countless thousands whose names are not found there. They may have been saved, but they are not in the body of which Christ is the Head. And yet we do find a church existing before the death and resurrection of Christ—in fact, an Old Testament church. In Matt. xviii. Christ speaks of the church in connection with the offending brother. We find the church also in Psa. xxii. 22. "In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." In Heb. ii. 12 the writer quotes these words, using "church" for "congregation." Then we find Stephen declaring (Acts vii. 38) that Moses was a member of the Old Testament church, "This is he that was in the church in the wilderness." But the Brethren quietly set Stephen aside and unchurch the great law-giver of Israel.

#### ERROR CONCERNING CHRIST'S COMING.

According to Plymouthism there are yet to be *two* comings of Christ. In the first He will come "for" His saints, to take them out of the world. This is to be invisible and in the air. The second will be at the "last day," when He will bring His saints "with" Him to judge the wicked. The "first" coming is invented to patch out their premillenarian theory. There is not the shadow of ground for it in the Word of God; it is only an unwarrantable inference drawn from Paul's words to the Thessalonians: "Them, also, which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." *Ergo*, He must have previously come "for" them, in order that He might now bring them "with" Him! Further, we are told that the Lord may come "for" His people any day or any hour—that there is nothing to prevent this. This is wonderful! If there were nothing to prevent Him, He certainly *would* come; and the very fact that He does not come is sufficient evidence that He is prevented by something. But the Brethren base another statement upon the one just made, viz., "the Scripture teaches that His people should live in daily expectation of His coming, as did the apostles and early Christians."

The Scripture teaches nothing of the kind concerning the apostles the huge blunders of modern premillenarians, to wit. It cannot be shown that the apostles lived in any such "daily expectation." On the contrary, Paul is constantly talking about his approaching "departure" by death, and Peter would have his readers remember certain things after his "decease." There is no Plymouthitic expectation of the Lord's coming in either case. But Paul has some positive teaching upon this matter, and it is fatal to the view of the Brethren. In 2 Thess. ii. 2 he rebukes the Thessalonians for their "daily expectation" error: "That ye be not soon shaken in mind; or be troubled; neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand!" And Peter, in his second epistle, and third chapter, makes it very clear that the day of the Lord's coming and the "last day" are one and the same event. Paul in 1 Thess. i. 7-10, teaches the same doctrine without the possibility of doubt.

On many other points the teaching of these people is not only defective, but positively erroneous. In our judgment their errors are more numerous and more fatal than those of the Roman Catholics. Repentance and the agency of the Holy Spirit, in working out the great purposes of Christian life and character, have no place in their creed. They are as bigoted as Mahomedans and as self-righteous as the Pharisees. If we are to believe them, sin is rampant everywhere except among themselves. On the whole, thanks to the constant batterings of their critics, they have patched up a tolerably consistent system of teaching—but at what a tremendous sacrifice of divine truth! The consistency is that of a patchwork or "crazy quilt," and in constructing it they have handled Scripture much in the same way as the ladies cut and shape the patches for that mysterious article. Texts are wrenched from their contextual meaning in a most reckless manner, and are cut down so as to fit into some nook or corner of the system. All that cannot be made to fit are thrown away as so much useless rubbish. There are but few people on earth who carry on so large a business in Scripture and holiness with so small an amount of capital invested. They are never amenable to argument. You may pelt them with logic; you may knock them from pillar to post with Scripture; you may leave them without a breath or a word to say for themselves, and in five minutes after they will as coolly proclaim the same errors to some one else, as if nothing had happened. Our policy must be, not to argue *with them*; but *to fully instruct our congregations in the truth of the Bible—to thoroughly indoctrinate the young, and so guard them against these and other errors.*

#### DIVINE HEALING AGAIN.

MR. EDITOR.—I desire with your permission to thank "T. F." for the courtesy of his reply to my query on the subject of Divine Healing. I have considered it very carefully but cannot say that it has helped me materially, mainly because it fails to deal with the phase of the belief which has impressed me most, which constitutes its very foundation and which it is evident "T. F." did not understand. He writes, "Believers in faith cure make it an unconditional demand and quite ignore what most Christians believe to be an essential of all true prayer, viz., that the request be subject to the will of God," and again, "We may be certain that in asking for the blessings of salvation we are asking according to His will and therefore should have faith to believe that our petition will be granted." Now this brings us right to the core of the whole matter. Such believers so far as I have come in contact with them or their writings are perfectly orthodox as to the essentials of true prayer. It is solely because they believe bodily healing to be one of "the blessings of salvation" and consequently "according to His will" that they "have faith to believe that their petitions will be granted." They claim that as originally created "in the image of God" (Gen. i. 27), man had no physical infirmities, which only came upon him after the fall as the result of sin, and that Christ's atonement for sin purchased salvation from its physical effects to the same extent and upon the same terms as it purchased salvation from its spiritual effects. And when searched from this stand-point it is simply amazing the support Scripture gives to this rendering. I am but a recent student on the subject and can only present it as I understand and have been impressed by it. David evidently referred to a dual salvation of this kind when he sang, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Isaiah prophesied and Christ fulfilled it when as Matthew says (viii. 16, 17), He "healed all that were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." Now if He "bare our sicknesses" as well as "bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter ii. 24), why should we continue to bear the one any more than the other? Christ's firm "I will" in response to the leper's hesitating "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean" (Mark i. 40, 41), seems designed to settle forever all doubt as to His "will" in the matter, when approached in the right spirit; James' straight assertion, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick" (James v. 15) goes to confirm this view. "If thou canst believe" (Mark ix. 23), imposed by Christ as the condition of answering a father's prayer for the healing of his son seems to have been the only "if" in the matter, and His "according to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew ix. 29), the only limit of result, both conditions, be it noted, being controlled solely

by the applicant. John's prayer, "that thou mayest prosper and be in health even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2), indicates the analogy which exists between the physical and spiritual natures and supplies the natural gauge whereby results upon the former must be measured. Many more passages of a similar bearing might be adduced but these will suffice to show the basis of the belief, which is simply, Christ came to heal, He did heal, He is "the same yesterday, to-day and forever" (Hebrew xiii. 8), therefore He will heal now. Can you believe? "If thou canst believe all things are possible to Him that believeth."

Are the people of God under the present dispensation to be in any worse position than under the former, to whom it was promised, "If thou wilt diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God and wilt do that which is right in His sight and wilt give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Ex. xv. 26). "And ye shall serve the Lord thy God and He shall bless thy bread and thy water and I will take away sickness from the midst of thee," (Exodus xxiii. 25, and again Deut. vii. 15)? And while obedient "there was not a feeble person among their tribes" (Psalms cv. 37).

There were no more removals of the "personal character of these afflictions" under either dispensation, but the actual removal of the afflictions themselves and that in both cases without the intervention of either physic or physicians and not for any conjectural design or purpose but as the result of faith and obedience "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken." Fatherly chastisements and means of grace they no doubt served as, but no longer necessary as such when the child had learned the lesson they were designed to teach.

The attitude of Christians towards this question to-day bears a remarkable analogy to the position of the Israelites before Canaan. They had received only half of their promised blessing, the other half lay before them, but the barriers which presented themselves out-taxed their faith, for "we see they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Hebrew iii. 19). The "giants" and the "walled cities" had the same effect upon them that the "means" and the "miracles" difficulties have upon us. Probably it was just such arguments as "T. F." uses concerning these that "made the heart of the people melt" for fear (Josh. xiv. 8). At all events they "entered not in because of unbelief." The believing minority who enjoyed that privilege was very, very small. How significantly pertinent then is Paul's warning thereon in Hebrews iii. and iv., "Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them, but did not profit them not being mixed with faith in them that heard it;" and how applicable his exhortation, "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." The question as it presents itself to me is not one of theory or human experience but of divine revelation and consequently of the most momentous importance to every Christian. If bodily healing is revealed in the Word as one of the promised "blessings of salvation," then we ought to be persuaded of and embrace it with, as "T. F." says, "The faith of child-like trust and cheerful acquiescence" irrespective of proof or consideration of consequences, as Paul tells us Abraham did, "being not weak in faith he considered not his own body now dead, but was strong in faith giving glory to God," etc., (Romans iv. 19-21). What startling possibilities does the very thought of its truth suggest, to us! What a wondrous charm and what a potent power would be added to the Gospel of Christ by its realization! The Church early fell into divers errors, is it not possible that "an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God," in respect of this very privilege may have been one of them. Would it not at all events be worth the Church's while in view of the revived interest in the subject to take it up and give it the calm unprejudiced and thorough investigation of modern scholarship and experience if only for the satisfaction and instruction of its interested members. I trust we may hear more from "T. F." and others on this subject. I have not attempted to answer his objections which will be found dealt with much more effectively than I could deal with them in almost every work on the subject, notably in a little book styled, "Enquiries and Answers," by Rev. A. B. Simpson, of New York. For a plain and scriptural statement of the belief I would refer the reader to the pamphlet "Scripture Parallelisms," by a Buffalo divine, a consideration of which cannot but be interesting and instructive. Both of these publications may be obtained at the Willard Tract Depository, Toronto. G. M. ROGER.

Peterboro', June 9, 1890.

PATRIOT U. P. Presbytery have unanimously granted the petition of the members of the preaching station at Bridge of Weir to be formed into a congregation. Although this station was only recently started there are already fifty-two members, and there is every prospect of a large congregation being speedily gathered.

THE Rev. William Alexander, senior pastor of Duntocher Free Church, died recently. He was ordained in 1838, but came out at the disruption and was followed by nearly the whole of his congregation. Mr. Alexander retired from the ministry in 1885, when Rev. J. Harvey, M.A., was appointed his colleague and successor.

THE Cooke Centenary Church, Belfast, is to be erected at North Parade, on a very desirable site adjoining Ormean-park. Mr. W. McCausland, one of the most active promoters of the undertaking, cut the first sod in the presence of a considerable company, whom he afterwards entertained at luncheon in a marquee on the grounds.